

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### Present Work of Gerhard Heilmann.

EDITOR OF 'THE AUK,'

It requires over a month to get a letter through from Denmark in these days of the senseless and destructive war in Europe. My last one from the distinguished Danish ornithologist, Gerhard Heilmann, was posted at the Sanatorium on the Nakkebølle Fjord, on the north coast of Denmark, on the 12th of last July, and it did not come into my hands until the 15th of August; it had been opened by an English censor and resealed (No. 4108).

This letter contains some very interesting notes that go to show that ornithology is not entirely extinct in Europe in these turbulent times. Among other matters, Mr. Heilmann writes me that he has built for himself, on the shore of the fjord, a small, one-room house of wood (3 × 5 meters), with a glass skylight. In this he paints his magnificent bird pictures during all kinds of weather. As he was penning his letter to me in this room, gulls and terns were constantly passing over his glass roof, and from his small window he could see yellow-hammers, black-birds, goldfinches, two species of wagtails (white and yellow), linnets, "and also a single nightingale seeking food for its young in its nest in the meadow near by." He says further that during June (1916), the woods immediately to the rear of his hut was filled with many kinds of birds, and their "morning concert was marvelous."

In addition to this hut he has built himself a very large wire aviary for gulls and ducks. This structure extends out over the waters of the fjord for a distance of fifteen meters, so that, when he is sitting in this cage, he can study many species of land and water birds at very close range. He is taking extensive notes on the variations they exhibit, as they fly, swim, or walk close to him. To study the big birds of prey, he has built a still larger cage, and he contemplates the building of one as big as both the others combined, in the near future, in which he will keep for study a number of species of the herons of Europe.

Mr. Heilmann will soon publish an article in Copenhagen on *Podiceps griseigena*, which he has painted life size, swimming under the surface of the water, "a very difficult task." This article will be beautifully illustrated by half-tones (colored) of the living bird, with other illustrations.

I believe it will be of interest to American ornithologists to learn that Mr. Heilmann has given to Mrs. Shufeldt and myself the sole right of translating into English his superb work on 'The Origin of Birds,' which, when published, will be the only English translation of the volume. Arrangements have been made with its original publishers at Copenhagen to send on the blocks for the 215 figures illustrating the work; so that now

is only required a reliable publishing house in this country, willing to undertake the enterprise, when the labor of translating from Danish into English will be entered upon, and the work pushed to a finish as rapidly as possible. When issued this work will be of the greatest value to all English speaking ornithologists, and to avian palæontologists as well.

Faithfully yours,

R. W. SHUFELDT.

3356-18th Street,  
Washington, D. C.  
August 18, 1916.

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### NOTES AND NEWS.

JOHN ALEXANDER HARVIE-BROWN, D. D., an Honorary Fellow of the American Ornithologists' Union, died at his residence, Dunipace House, Stirlingshire, Scotland, July 26, 1916. He was born at Dunipace August 27, 1844, and spent his life there being a landed proprietor and an excellent example of a gentleman of leisure who devoted himself to natural history.

He was best known for his work in connection with the splendid 'Vertebrate Fauna of Scotland,' of which he was chief editor and author of many of the volumes. He was also the founder, owner and joint editor of the 'Annals of Scottish Natural History,' as well as a staunch supporter of its successor 'The Scottish Naturalist.' While his chief interest lay in the study of his home country, and the outlying Hebrides, Orkneys and Shetland Islands, he in early life explored the Petchora and Dwina valleys with Seebolm and Alston, and parts of Transylvania with Danford. The ornithological results of these trips appeared later in 'The Ibis.' He was much interested in bird migration and was a member of the committee of the British Association appointed for investigation in this field.

The collection of skins and eggs which he had formed in conjunction with Col. Feilden was destroyed by fire in 1897 and the loss was a severe blow to him.

In later life, in fact for many years, Dr. Harvie-Brown was unable to travel about and was known to the present generation of ornithologists mainly through his publications and through correspondence.

Dr. Harvie-Brown became a member of the British Ornithologists' Union in 1873 and was elected one of the original Correspondents of the A. O. U. in 1883, being advanced to Honorary Fellowship in 1902. In 1912 the University of Aberdeen conferred upon him the degree of LL.D. in recognition of his services in the cause of Natural History.